

# The Mid-Michigan Mirror

... A Reflection of Romance



Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-size Chapter Newsletter Contest

November 2007

Volume V Issue 9

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## —THE BOARD ROOM—

### MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Romance Writers of America® is to promote excellence in romantic fiction, to help writers publish and establish careers, and to provide continuing support for writers within the romance publishing industry.



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## November Program: Romance + Suspense or Suspense + Romance?

Are you writing romantic suspense or suspense with romance? Who's publishing these books and how are they similar or different?

MMRWA's Maris Soule will discuss not only the similarities and differences between the two genres but also those between RWA® and MWA, the publishers buying these stories, and what a writer needs to consider when writing one. She will also cover the research necessary for a story of this nature, the importance of the villain, and the "ticking time bomb" (otherwise known as pacing).

We'll meet at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 17, at La Señorita Restaurant in Lansing. Our program will begin after lunch at approximately 1:30 p.m. The business meeting and Board of Directors Election follow our speaker.

Directions to the meeting are on page 2. **MMM**

Maris Soule majored in art in college, but her love of books led her to writing, and her love of happy endings led her to romances. So far, she's authored 25 contemporary series romances, which have been translated into 18 foreign languages and sold worldwide. Always the Gemini, she likes variety, but has stuck with the same man for 33 years, following him even from sunny California to a too-cold-in-the-winter/too-humid-in-the-summer home near Kalamazoo, Michigan. Maris is a two-time RWA® RITA finalist and a two-time winner of the Write Touch Readers' Award. After many years as a romance writer, Maris Soule broke into still another genre with her recent sale of *The Crows*, a mystery. For more information, check out her new website at: [www.MarisSoule.com](http://www.MarisSoule.com).



Maris Soule

## 2007 MMRWA Meeting Schedule

*MMRWA holds monthly meetings on a rotating basis in the areas of Grand Rapids, Jackson, Kalamazoo, and Lansing. The Saturday luncheon meetings are held from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in local restaurants and are open to the public. Meetings begin with lunch (optional) and the programs start at approximately 1:30 p.m. There is no charge for the meeting and program; luncheon charges are the responsibility of the individual attendees.*

**January:** No meeting.

**February 17:** Elks Lodge in Grand Rapids; Grand Rapids Police Lt. Mark Ostapowicz will speak about his experiences in the Grand Rapids Police Department.

**March 17:** Brewster's Kalamazoo; Nancy Gideon compares "The Tortoise and the Hare approach to your writing."

**April 20-22:** St. Ives Resort, Stanwood, Retreat From Harsh Reality 2007; Julie Kistler, guest author.

**May 19:** Jackson, tentatively scheduled at Daryl's Downtown. Gail Gaymer Martin speaks on "How to Write an Inspirational Romance and Get a How-to Book Published with Writer's Digest."

**June 16:** La Senorita, Lansing; Jodi Lozon-Copeland discusses the erotica market.

**July:** No meeting.

**August 18:** Grand Rapids; Famous Dave's new location on Northland Drive; Kent County Assistant Prosecutor Kimberly Bolthouse, speaker.

**September 15:** Brewster's, Kalamazoo; Jennifer Greene discusses "Trends: How to Balance an Author's Creative Needs and Still Address What it Takes to be Commercial."

**October 20:** Tentative—Jackson Library, multi-author panel discussion.

**November 17:** La Senorita, Lansing; Maris Soule on writing romantic suspense and suspense with romance.

**December:** Grand Rapids -- either Famous Dave's or Elks -- Christmas Party.



## November Meeting Directions

**Directions to: La Señorita Mexican Restaurant**  
**2706 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing, MI**  
**Phone: 517-485-0166**

**From the North (Mt. Pleasant):** Take US-127 S to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the first traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

**From the South (Ann Arbor, Jackson, Kalamazoo):** Take I-94 to US-127 N. Take Exit 8, 127 N toward Flint/Clare to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. From the exit ramp, turn LEFT at the traffic light onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the second traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

**From the West (Grand Rapids):** Take I-96 East to merge onto I-69 North via Exit #89 toward Flint/Clare. Go 10 miles. Merge onto US-127 S via Exit #89A toward E. Lansing. Go 3.2 miles. Take the Lake Lansing Road Exit. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the first traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

**From the East (Brighton):** Take I-96 West to merge onto US-127 N via Exit #106B toward Downtown Lansing. Take Exit 8, 127N toward Flint/Clare to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. From the exit ramp, turn LEFT at the traffic light onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the second traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

**2007 OFFICERS****President**

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## The President's Two Cents Worth

By Annette Briggs



As we approach 2008 as a chapter, RWA® is requiring all chapters to adopt Standard Chapter Bylaws and have this assignment completed by May 1. In those Standard Chapter Bylaws, there are many areas that we can modify to suit our individual needs, but there are a few articles that are mandatory. This shouldn't cause us any anxiety. Our bylaws were well constructed to begin with and the mandatory parts should mesh without a great deal of juggling. We have a skilled committee (Dawn Bartley and Lana Miersen) to handle this for us.

There are four mandatory articles that we must adopt without any modification. They are Articles 2, 3 11, and 15.

ARTICLE 2 specifies chapter purposes and limitations and reads nearly identical to our mission statement as is routinely seen in our newsletter. Included in this article is the mention of carrying on activities in compliance with our tax-exempt non-profit status.

ARTICLE 3 has to do with chapter affiliation with RWA® and the requirement of RWA® membership as well as continuing chapter membership for members and officers of each chapter. Chapters must submit a current membership roster, maintain (and provide to RWA® upon request) a complete record of its income and expenses, and comply with all IRS requirements applicable to it, to RWA®. Included in this article is mention of the mandatory articles and procedure for amendments.

ARTICLE 11 is to assure all dues and other chapter income is used for the entire chapter rather than any individual members, allowing reasonable compensation for contractor services and the like. This forbids chapter funds to be used for "hardship" or similar funds. Therefore, that money needs to come from other sources such as donations.

ARTICLE 15 deals with the perpetual duration of the corporation (our chapter) and the manner in which chapters are dissolved.

Our current MMRWA Bylaws are online in our business loop files. If you would like to make comparisons between them and the new standard requirements, go to [MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com](mailto:MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com). If you're unable to make this work, feel free to contact me.

I'd like to encourage members to ask questions and discuss our bylaws while we're in the process of adopting the RWA® Standard Chapter Bylaws. By doing this, we'll have a document that we understand and serves us well.

All the best,

Annette

*[Our October program featured a member discussion of contest experiences, followed by open critiquing; there is no October recap. Instead, we have the second part of Dirk's story. -Ed.]*

## September Program Recap: The Male Perspective, Part II



**By Dawn Bartley**

Now that we've established that Dirk was not a pirate or a scientist, who was he after serving in the U.S. Army? Well, he used the G.I. Bill to pay for college. Dirk enrolled at Western Michigan University to become an electrical engineer, and he started classes . . . for a while.

In Part One, we mentioned that Dirk had taken a pound of marijuana to Michigan Tech. Well, just because he learned that he couldn't study and smoke that much weed didn't mean he couldn't smoke a little here and there in social situations. Dirk continued to use drugs recreationally, trying a little of this and a little of that, and finally trying cocaine.

It didn't take just one experience with cocaine for Dirk to decide he wanted to deal it. No, as with most things in our lives, it came from circumstances. Dirk first dealt marijuana, 'mary jane,' when someone he knew preferred dealing 'm.j.' but another user needed someone to deal cocaine. Dirk decided, 'why not?'

This, of course, was while he was still earning his degree. It started small and just grew from there. While he was dealing, he lived by certain *rules*. He didn't deal from the place where he lived (which was with his brother) and he didn't mention specifics on the phone. Dirk felt fairly safe and 'successful' in this career, and still managed to complete classes towards his degree and graduate with his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering.

Then one day, things came to a halt. Two plain-clothes detectives from Kalamazoo's Public Safety Division came knocking on his brother's door. They informed Dirk that so-and-so had been arrested and turned evidence against him. They handed him a card and said please present yourself at the station at a specific time so we can discuss your options.

Well, Dirk knew he was stuck. He assumed his best option was to go ahead and meet with them. Dirk presented himself to the authorities at the predetermined time and began his long process with law enforcement. One of the things he learned – they will drag things out as long as they can. If they have six months to charge you for something, they will wait until five months and twenty-nine days. When all the dirt was finally aired, Dirk pled guilty to "distribution of a substance containing a mixture of cocaine between 1 and 50 grams" and was to await sentencing.

At the court date, Dirk was led into the courtroom in handcuffs. The room was filled with family and friends. He gave his mom a little wave, but didn't anticipate the horror he'd see in her face at watching her youngest child in shackles facing 1-20 or lifetime probation. The judge began to hand out his sentence and commented that he had never seen such a turnout. Most times the courtroom is filled to offer victim impact statements or with others who just want to see the guilty get the



*Dawn Bartley*





deserved punishment. This time the room was filled with family and friends of Dirk's family. They were all there to support him. The judge saw this as a good sign and sentenced Dirk to six months of home monitoring (a tether) and lifetime probation.

In order to earn a living and pay court costs and lawyer fees, Dirk still had to get a job. While Dirk was awaiting a sentencing hearing, he worked a few temp jobs, then interviewed with Koolant Coolers, a company that made industrial chillers. He was very honest with them. He told them that he had earned a degree in electrical engineering, but that he was also awaiting sentencing for his conviction. Koolant Coolers agreed to hire him as a worker in the shop building electrical boxes for industrial equipment. If things turned out well for him and he continued to improve performance, then maybe he could work his way up to an engineering position.

While on a tether, Dirk was fortunate that Koolant Coolers continued to employ him. He lived with his parents on a lake, but the electronic monitoring device would not allow him the distance to swim in a lake. The device was not even to get wet in the shower and was to be covered with a plastic bag. This led Dirk to take up an inside hobby to occupy his time—computers. He played a first-person action game and designed a level of his own for the game.

After the tether was removed, and a few work weeks passed with the now convicted felon continuing to show up for work at 5:00AM, Dirk was given the opportunity to leave the electrical team to become a test stand operator. When an engineering position was available, he was offered the chance to design the equipment. Eventually, he became information systems manager, filling a quarter of his time.

I met him while he was working at Koolant Coolers. A college friend worked with Dirk and several of us girlfriends and the college friend's co-workers got together to celebrate birthdays. As the story goes, Dirk wasn't about to show up at that particular drinking establishment – until the friend said her single sorority sisters were going to be there.

Now, my friend who worked with Dirk often shared stories about her co-workers, so I wasn't disturbed by Dirk's sordid past. We met, danced and talked. Apparently, he was smitten with me so much that he spent most of the weekend with us (I was in from out of town).

The next week he asked my friend if I would welcome a call. I would. We started talking to each other everyday. Not a day has gone by in the last ten years that we haven't talked to each other – no matter which one of us was out of town. Anyway, we started spending our weekends together and meeting for dinner once each week. After six weeks, Dirk asked me to marry him and without hesitation, I said yes.

But, there was a small obstacle: Telling my parents everything. I told my parents about Dirk's proposal and they decided to take a long weekend away from the dairy farm to drive five hundred-plus miles to meet this man I'd agreed to marry. Introducing Dirk to my parents was the easy part. Telling them about his past, not so much.

While at my apartment that weekend, Dirk said he had something to tell my parents. When he shared that he was a convicted felon, Dirk remembers my Dad did an about face and sat down on the couch to digest the information. Dirk very patiently explained the details of his conviction and addiction and answered any questions they had. We also took the time that weekend to introduce my parents to Dirk's parents. My soon-to-be father-in-law, the college professor, was so nervous at meeting my dairy-farming parents that he forgot to put the coffee pot under the coffee maker. Coffee spread all over the counter before anyone noticed.



The Chapter publishes its business meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, and other legal documents online in the files section of the members-only MMRWABUSINESS list. See Policy, page 13.

## —CHAPTER CHATTER—

### October Member News

**Cynthia Arends:** Finaled twice in the 2007 Hot Prospect Contest; *Lord Andrews's Match*, Historical category and *Wings of Desire*, Erotic Romance category.

**Dawn Bartley:** Slow but sure wins the race.

**Rosanne Bittner:** President of Coloma Lioness Club this year. Modeling and giving away books for door prizes at annual Lioness Fashion Show Luncheon Nov. 10. Speaking with other writers at The Box Factory in St. Joseph, MI, Nov. 18, 1:00-4:00 p.m. and will bring books to sell. Finished a 20,000-word cut to World War II book! No set pub date for the book. Harlequin needs to place it in a new line since cutting Everlasting Love line. Working on Native American paranormal and new western historical. Invited to be a keynote speaker at 2008 Wisconsin RWA Fall conference, will be paid and all expenses covered.

**Annette Briggs:** I'm working on my SF and dabbling in some others, trying to keep in mind that what I need is a FINISHED ms.

**Lynette Curtis:** Revising my manuscript before I decide to submit.

**Katie Dubois:** I won first place in the Saskatchewan Romance Writers "We Dare You" contest for my Regency-era historical *Lion Eyes*.

**Kelli Finger:** I entered The Wild Rose Press Through the Garden Gate Contest in August, and I don't believe I made the finals, but an editor from Wild Rose would like me to revise the beginning and the portal through which the heroine travels back in time. Of course, I said I'd be glad to make the changes, so we'll see. :-). This is really exciting for me. It made my day.

**Margo Hoornstra:** Wild Rose Press offered contract for short story. Editor requested more. Completed ms is currently making rounds of agents.

**Loralee Lillibridge:** Continuing work on contemporary for SSE, set in the Texas Hill Country. Leaving for St. Louis, MO. Nov. 1 for the Forensic University workshop hosted by Sisters in Crime. Have a cozy mystery series on the back burner. Will be on the romance panel- booksigning with other MMRWA authors on Nov. 18 at THE BOOK FACTORY in St. Joseph, MI. Working on the PASIC 2009 NYC conference committee.

**Alyssa Marble:** Entered Golden Heart. Trying to do last minute editing before I send it in.

**Gail Gaymer Martin:** I was in Dallas for the Am. Christian Fiction Writers conference and then on to a 13-day trip to Greece and Turkey. Arrived home and had to leave in five days to present a keynote address in Aurora, IL at a churchwomen's convention. I sold lots of books, but it was very tiring with all the travel and then home on Sunday to sign a double conference -- afternoon and evening. I'm still tired.

**Catherine McClain:** Katie will be arriving this Saturday the 27th from smoke-covered Los Angeles for a one-week visit. Looking forward to seeing her! I'm working hard on my story revision that I've entered into the Golden Heart contest and am very excited by how the story has changed from when I first wrote it a couple of years ago.

**Julie McMullen:** *Ties That Bind* placed first in MMRWA's HEA Contest Paranormal Category!



### November

**1st** Lisa Cardle  
Susan Charnley  
Ami Weaver

**14th** Irene Atkinson

**19th** Johanna Atwood Brown





## December

**3rd** Tereasa Bellew  
**5th** Lucy Kubash  
**9th** Alison Hart  
**18th** Wendy Lebel  
**20th** Flavia Crowner



Alyssa Marble

**Lana Miersen:** Stopped travelling for a while and am catching up on office work. Editing newsletters. Reading to at-risk kids in early childhood education center. Had an “aha!” moment and am reworking plot of WIP.

**Roger Nelson:** Wrote children’s story for Highlights magazine to enter in contest. Have been writing for both my unfinished books. I plan on having at least a first draft of both books completed by the December meeting.

**Cindy Spencer Pape:** In the ratings list for the December *RT*, my book *Curses* got a 4!!!! This was the original Trisk version, but they offered to hold the review until a new edition came out, which I thought was very kind. I was interviewed live on Melissa Alvarez’s web radio program on Friday, November 2, at 11:00-11:15 Eastern. The broadcast will be saved and can be played later as a podcast.

**Patti Shenberger:** I went to the Emerald City Conference in Seattle and had a fabulous time. Getting a manuscript ready for submission to Cerridwen Press and looking to find a job now that the health issues are resolved.

**Maris Soule:** Participated in the Grand Rapids Library’s “Celebration of the Book” and attended “Magna cum Murder” in October. Will be participating in the St. Joe Box Factory’s event in November and in Kalamazoo’s Art Hop the first Friday in December. Receiving some great reviews for *The CROWS*, including a 4-star review in *RT* and an absolutely fabulous one from *The Library Journal*. Since Five Star primarily sells to libraries, this makes me VERY happy. Still working on my Skagway story. This month, I’m teaching an interactive on-line class offered by the Hearts Through History chapter titled Writing Basics: From A (Action scenes) to Z (Zest), which begins Monday, November 5, 2007.

**Ami Weaver:** *The Wrong Mr. Right* finaled in the Short Contemporary category of the 2007 Hot Prospect Contest. **MMM**

## Welcome Our New Member!

**Alyssa Marble** graduated from Grand Valley State University with a BA in English. She attempted her first novel in middle school, complete with damsel-in-distress and knight-in-shining-armor. She currently lives in Charlotte, Michigan, with two cats, one dog and her husband—who managed to read her entire first manuscript without laughing. **MMM**

## Calendar of Events

### NOVEMBER 2007

- 15:** Deadline for Golden Heart Contest entry forms and fees
- 17:** MMRWA Board of Directors Election at November Meeting. Reminder—take toiletries to the meeting for the Y’s shelter.
- 30:** Deadline for submitting last page for “I Will Write a Book” Challenge
- 30:** Deadline for RITA Award Contest entry forms and fees

### DECEMBER 2007

- 3:** Receipt Deadline for works entered in the Golden Heart Contest

### JANUARY 2008

- 2:** Receipt Deadline for books entered in the RITA Award Contest



## Members' Current and Upcoming Releases

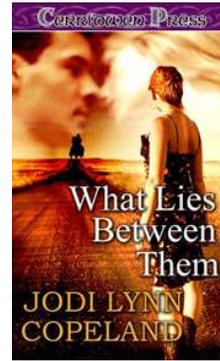
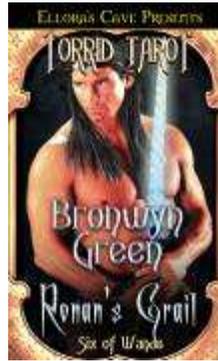


### November 2007

**Chris Allen-Riley** (w/a Bronwyn Green): *Ronan's Grail*, Ellora's Cave.

**Jodi Lynn Copeland**: *What Lies Between Them*, eBook, Cerridwen Press

**Cindy Spencer Pape**: *One Good Man*, a novel co-written by Lacey Thorn, possibly out for Thanksgiving from Ellora's Cave.



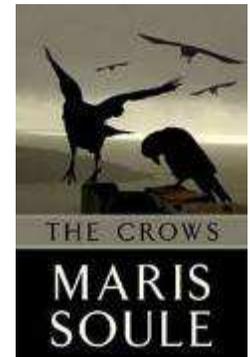
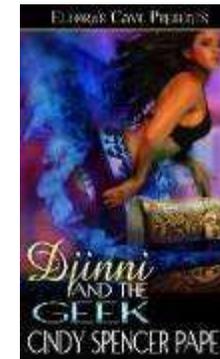
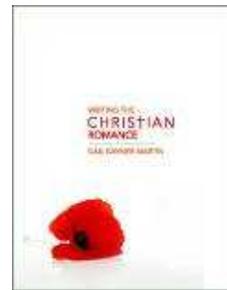
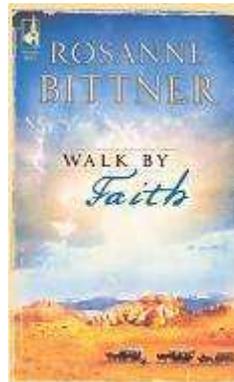
### December 2007

**Rosanne Bittner**: *Walk By Faith*, Steeple Hill, reissue.

**Gail Gaymer Martin**: *Writing the Christian Romance*, Writers Digest Books.

**Cindy Spencer Pape**: *Djinni and the Geek* (digital), Ellora's Cave.

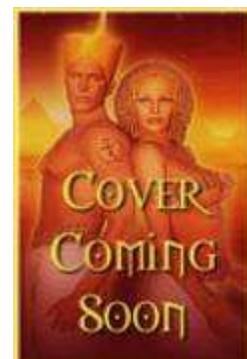
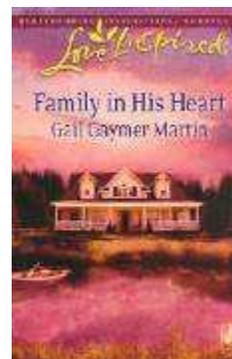
**Maris Soule**: *The Crows*, Five Star Mystery



### January 2008

**Gail Gaymer Martin**: *Family In His Heart*, Steeple Hill Love Inspired

**Cindy Spencer Pape**: *Stone And Earth* (Jewels of the Nile Quickie), [Ellora's Cave](http://Ellora'sCave.com)



## —THE WRITING LIFE—

*[November is National American Indian Heritage Month. With Thanksgiving Day only weeks away, it seemed fitting to reflect on Native Americans, who helped make the first Thanksgiving possible, and to focus on the writing of Native American historical romance. Who better to guide us along the right path than our own award-winning Woman Writing the West, Rosanne Bittner. —Ed.]*



*Rosanne Bittner*

### IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT

by *Rosanne Bittner*

When Lana asked me for an article about writing the Native American story, I was a bit surprised. For the past three years, I have been working on re-write after re-write of my World War II love story, which (finally) is sold and ready to go. It will be published in September 2008 (title still tentative). I expected a request for an article about my experiences in changing genres and writing about World War II, which I still fully intend to do, but that can wait until the pub date draws closer.

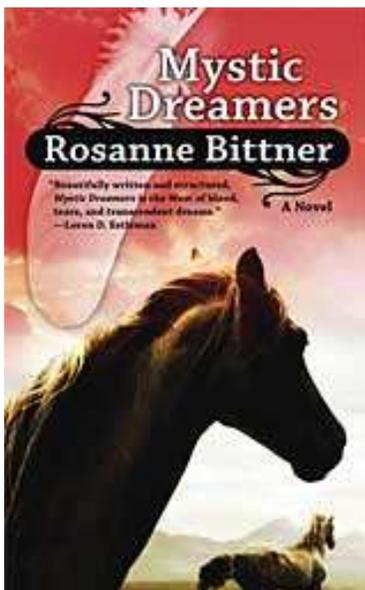
Meantime, I am so happy to get back to writing what I love best – America's Old West and Native Americans. It has been a long time since I ventured back into time. I have a lot of studying to do to get myself re-oriented in the Old West and the spiritualism of the Native Americans; however, I don't need to re-study the basic rules for writing about America's First People. Those rules are as follows:

1. Never make up something when it comes to writing about Native American life, beliefs and customs. We all enjoy some extent of poetic license in our writing, but we must tread lightly when it comes to something as sacred and meaningful as this subject.

2. Never go beyond what you have learned and are able to understand about Native American life and customs. If you aren't sure about something, don't put it in your story. Better to leave it out than to look like a fool to those who understand this subject, especially the Indians themselves!

The last thing you want to do is insult Native Americans and their rich history by "getting it wrong." You can't rely on how Indians were portrayed in the old westerns, or even in some of the newer ones. You need to study your subject well and don't "suppose" anything. Most of all you need to try your best to forget you are "white" and try hard to get "into" the head, heart, and beliefs of the Native American.

Taking it further, you need to be specific when it comes to a certain tribe's customs and beliefs. They were not all the same. If you are going to write about the Great Spirit, it's better to name that God specifically if you are zeroing in on a certain tribe – as Wakan Tanka for the Sioux and for the Cheyenne it's Maheo. The Cheyenne also had names for God of the Sky, Heammawihio; and God Under the Earth, Ahktunowihio. Different tribes had different names for the months of the year, as "Moon of Strong Cold," which the Arapaho used for January. The Navaho called January the "Moon When The Snow Drifts Into The Tapis." For the Cheyenne it was the "Sore Eye Moon"



(the bright snow hurts the eyes); and the Sioux called it "Moon Of The Heavy Snows," or sometimes the "Moon Of The Snowblind."

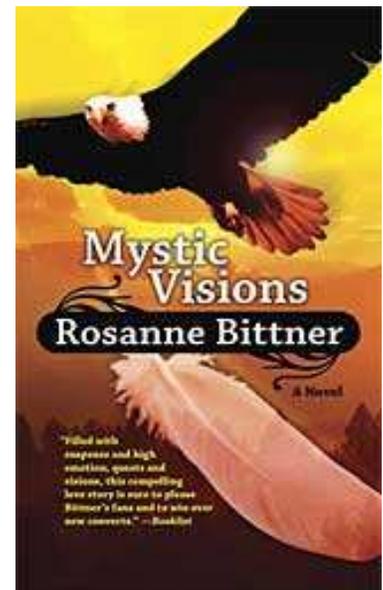
Various tribes had different customs when it came to sacrifices to their Gods, the birth of a child, a young woman's or a young man's coming of age and other rituals. It's impossible to lump all Indians into one way of life or one belief. They all have different stories about how they came to be and where their Gods come from. Writing about Native Americans commands a deep respect for their culture and beliefs.

The hardest part in writing about Native Americans is trying to "leave" this contemporary life and your own personal way of life, day-to-day problems and chores – and get "into" the daily life and "into" the mind of the 18th or 19th Century Native American (or even farther back, if that is your subject preference). For instance, writing about a brutal Indian attack on whites is often difficult to do; but if you can just imagine what was going through the Indians' minds, it becomes easier.

Just think how you would feel today if countries like Iran, Iraq or Pakistan came here and took over the United States. What if you were forced to take on their religion and turn against everything you ever believed? What if you were forced to dress like them, adapt to their way of life, their rules, and their laws? What if you were forced out of your own home, marched off to some desolate part of the country and told that is where you must live the rest of your life? What if you were punished for speaking your own language? What if your children were torn from your arms and forced to attend a school far away, where they were compelled to dress and speak like another people and educated their way? What if your food source was decimated and you and your family were starving? What if the leaders of an invading country made a pact with you, promising you certain lands, certain help – promising never to come into those lands and disrupt the way you choose to live – and then they turned around and broke every treaty they ever made with you?

Would you be devastated? Would you mourn the children and other loved ones who were slaughtered in the taking of your land? Would you long for your old way of life? Would you want to fight back? Of course, you would, and that was all the Native Americans wanted. Very seldom did they attack and murder and cause mayhem just for the joy of it. Their battles were nearly always in self-defense; to protect their land, food and loved ones; or in retaliation for a grave injustice. For the most part, America's Indians were peaceful in the beginning. They tried to get along, tried to abide by treaties, and overall they simply tried to protect what they considered theirs by right.

In the end, the Native Americans were forced to give up the hope of ever living as they once lived. They had to find ways to survive in their new life and in new locations, far from what they considered their sacred lands. They quit fighting simply for the sake of starving children and old ones – to preserve what was left of their Nations. Thank goodness, many tribes managed to cling to old languages and customs and have handed them down



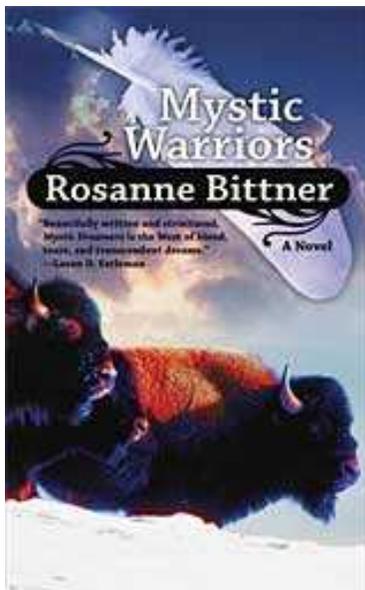
through the years so that today many tribes still celebrate certain rites and still teach their language to the young people.

Today, most newer movies, like *Dances With Wolves*, get the story straight when it comes to Native American history. They even use real Indians and Indian languages, instead of white men with died skin and feathers in their hair. Worst of all in those old movies was the stilted English those "fake" Indians spoke, like "Me heap angry."

Even many of the old historical romances got it very wrong. One old historical romance I read had whites fighting Indians over gold – in an area of the country where gold never existed. And Indians never fought over gold itself. They had no use for it. They only fought to keep the gold diggers off their land. And in my own very first book, Savage Destiny's *Sweet Prairie Passion*, I used the term "squaw" in reference to Indian women, mainly because I'd heard it used in old movies. I had no idea it was a horribly demeaning word to the Indians, and no man who respected them (which my hero did – he was half-Indian himself) would have used that term. Horror of horrors!! I will never live that one down! But I was brand new in my writing and had no idea what I was doing!

I wrote that book in 1980, 27 years ago! Over all the years since then I have learned so much about our Native Americans, and the more I learn, the more I respect and honor these people ... and the more I try to "get it right" when I write about them.

For any of you who are contemplating this genre, I have many, many books on the subject. Feel free to contact me and perhaps I will have something you need to "get it right" and to properly honor the proud people who were here first and who – still today – can teach us so much about conservation and how to honor Mother Earth. And studying Native American culture can even bring you closer to God, through an appreciation for their strong spiritual beliefs and the fact that they practiced those beliefs to the fullest extent. For the Native American, church didn't come just on Sundays. They lived their religion twenty-four/seven. **MMM**



A few of Rosanne's awards.

*First published in 1983, Rosanne Bittner has had 57 books published since then, nearly all of them Western Romance and Native American stories, a subject about which she is very passionate. Rosanne has won numerous awards for her writing. She spent the past three years working on a World War II love story, one she wanted to write for many years. Still, it's American History, and Rosanne loves the subject. She is currently considering a new western historical romance and a Native American paranormal (also historical). She and her husband recently returned from a 5900-mile road trip out west and live in Las Vegas for two months every winter. Rosanne is a member of numerous historical organizations and has been a member of MMRWA for many years, having served in the past as Vice-President (for 2 years) and as President. She conducts writing workshops and speaks at various clubs and organizations. Be sure to visit Rosanne's web site at [www.rosannebittner.com](http://www.rosannebittner.com).*

*Recap, continued from page 5*

I think that action alone put everyone on an even keel. When my folks realized that Dirk had cleaned up his act and held a good job that could provide security for me, they relaxed about our marriage and have supported us whole-heartedly ever since.

During Dirk's talk, a question was asked, "Did you think it would be hard to date or fall in love after your experience?" Dirk's answer was "No," and I think that comes from his confidence in who he is as a person. He realizes he has flaws and he's okay with that. He also knows he has strengths, and he's learned the ability to compromise from his parents.

Our wedding tracked along just fine. I went with Dirk to visit his probation officer and cleared permission to leave the state for our honeymoon. After our wedding, on occasion, I would receive a call from his probation officer, reminding Dirk to stop in the next day. That particular probation officer understood that he could occasionally be forgetful, and most likely he had many other clients that were of far greater concern than one who would occasionally forget an appointment.

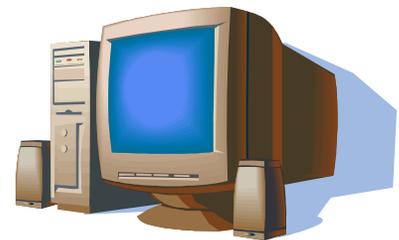
Dirk continued his work designing industrial chillers while still learning more and more about computers, information systems, software, etc. He also became interested in open-source software. Finally, he decided that he no longer wanted to work in such a high-pressure production position with lots of overtime. He found a position where he is in charge of all software backups, programming changes for ordering software, and still gets down and dirty re-routing wiring.

After about six years, the laws in the state changed, and Dirk's lifetime probation was rescinded. To celebrate, we went with friends across the state line for dinner, and then stopped for a photo opportunity at the state line.

I know this article may not be an exact program recap, but I hope that by going through the timeline of Dirk's use and abuse of narcotics, you can understand how a person can get caught up in it and turn his life around.

It's best to remember that the adults are not the only ones impacted. At a family circle during a special dinner, the youngest nephew said, "I'm happy about bad guys." He understood that his uncle had done something he shouldn't have but loved him just the same, something we can remember when capturing the emotions of our characters.

Next month we'll take a look at one of my husband's greatest loves (besides me) – open source software. **MMM**



*Dawn Bartley always knew she wanted to write. She attempted short bits of fiction in high school and some scribbled scenes during the less than thrilling classes in college. She loved writing so much she became a technical writer and worked for Stryker Instruments and Pfizer. She's now a stay-at-home doggy mom still working away on getting that first book published. Dawn also uses her creative juices to quilt and knit when she's not volunteering at the W. K. Kellogg Biological Station.*

## —THE LAST WORD—

### Editor's Note: Legend vs. Reality

While in Massachusetts last month, my dh and I visited Plimouth Plantation [*That's the way they spell it.*], a living history museum complex outside of Boston. [*I'm second from the left in the photo below.*] As an introduction to the exhibits—living recreations of a native village and an English settlement, peopled by actors and present-day descendents of the original tribe—we viewed a film that presented the real story of the First Thanksgiving.

For one thing, it wasn't really a first thanksgiving, because the Pilgrims had thanksgiving feasts whenever they had a good harvest or whenever there was something to celebrate. For another, the Pilgrims and the Native People did not trust one another and were not friends. They did share a feast, but it did not happen in the way we have come to believe. In the retelling of the story through the years, the legend overtook and eclipsed the reality.

This experience prompted me to ask Rosanne Bittner to pen an article on writing the Native American historical romance. She did not disappoint, and she pulled no punches, demanding that we do our research and get it right. Thank you, Rosanne, for a kick-butt article.

Thanks also to Dawn Bartley for the second installment of hubby Dirk's September talk, and thanks to our president Annette for explaining the reasoning behind the adoption of standard bylaws.

In December, we will wrap up the year with a light-hearted look at procrastination from Tereasa Bellew, the final installment of Dirk's story, and a friendly challenge from Lynette Curtis to make the most of our writing potential.

On November 22, may our chapter be thankful for having such generous, supportive members and so many fabulous writers. MMRWA is truly blessed.

*Lana Miersen, Editor*



### Submission Guidelines

**Topics:** writing-related—business/marketing, craft, how-to, interviews with industry professionals, book reviews, member news, member bios, members' latest releases, and program recaps, etc.

**Manuscripts:** single-spaced, readable 12 pt. black font, no special formatting or colors, one-inch margins, saved in rich text format.

**Deadline:** the 2nd Saturday of the month, unless otherwise stated. Member News deadline is the 3rd Saturday (meeting day).

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Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan RWA, our meetings, and joining our chapter, may email our membership chair at [members@midmichiganrwa.org](mailto:members@midmichiganrwa.org), write to MMRWA, P.O. Box 2725, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725, or visit our chapter online at [www.midmichiganrwa.org](http://www.midmichiganrwa.org) to learn all about us.

Official Ballot  
 Mid-Michigan RWA #12  
 2008 Board of Directors Election  
 Complete and return by November 17, 2007  
 (Voting by proxy is not permitted.)

If voting by mail, send to:  
 MMRWA 2008 Election  
 P.O. Box 2725  
 Kalamazoo MI 49003-2725  
 If voting by Email, send to:  
 MMRWABUSINESS-owner@yahoo.com  
 If voting via Fax, send to:  
 517-651-9762

2008 CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE  
 PRESIDENT

- Annette Briggs (Incumbent)
- Write-in Candidate\* \_\_\_\_\_

VICE-PRESIDENT

- Lynette Curtis
- Write-in Candidate\* \_\_\_\_\_

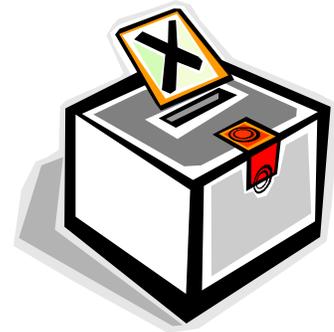
CO-SECRETARIES

- Jennifer Kamptner and Ami Weaver
- Write-in Candidates\* \_\_\_\_\_

TREASURER

- Catherine McClain (Incumbent)
- Write-in Candidate\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Permission must first be obtained from the write-in candidate before entering his/her name on the ballot.



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